

EARLY HISTORY OF OLD VIRGINIA

Volume Two of "Records of House of Burgesses" Is Now Out.

LIBRARY BOARD'S GREAT WORK

Most Important Historical Work That Was Ever Undertaken by Patriotic Virginians.

The Literary Board of the Virginia State Library is making gratifying progress in the work assigned it—that is to say, the task of publishing, under the editorship of Mr. John P. Kennedy, the "Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia." The first volume of this interesting work came from the press something less than a year ago, and was extensively reviewed in this paper. The second volume, the first copy of which is just from the press of the Everett Wadley Company, is even more interesting than the first volume, in that it covers the legislation of Colonial Virginia from the years 1729-1775, inclusive. Within that period the Colonial House of Burgesses, which was then to all intents and purposes what is now known as the Virginia Legislature, had a record which has an important bearing upon the Virginia of to-day, as well as to a large section of Western country which is now Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee.

In the sessions of the House of Burgesses, faithfully recorded in this volume, may be found the complete history of the acquisition by the colony of Virginia of the Cherokee Indian lands to the west of us. These lands had been practically acquired by treaty with the chiefs of the various Indian tribes and sub-tribes, and it remained for the House of Burgesses, during the period indicated, to confirm, ratify and put into permanent effect the treaties already agreed upon. In this particular the second volume of this interesting work at once becomes one of the most important chapters in the history of early Virginia.

Tremendous Undertaking.

In this connection it may naturally be interesting to the readers of this paper some idea of the difficult and arduous work of compiling this record of early Virginia history. There are but fragments of Colonial legislative history to be found in America, for reasons that students of early Virginia history very well understand. Under the decree of the Crown all legislative journals were required to be sent to England, the colonies only keeping copies here when they saw fit to do so. It happened that these did not always see fit to keep duplicate copies. The result is that the history of legislative proceedings in the Colony of Virginia, to be found in this Colony, were to seek the best framers. Therefore, when the Literary Board undertook the task of making a complete story of the journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, it was found that they had undertaken a job of enormous dimensions. The official copy of these records is only to be found in the British Library in London. The Literary Board, soon after the appointment, engaged H. F. Stevens & Brown, the famous London printers, to copy from the original records the complete legislative records of the House of Burgesses of Virginia; or, strictly speaking, as much of them as was necessary to fit the gaps in the existing records. This work has occupied every journal back to 1750, and it is to be hoped that by the time the allotted period is reached—probably no journal, the copyists will have completed their task. That date is 1875, when the first Assembly in America convened at Jamestown.

Special Privileges Granted.

The London record office, above referred to, is a "little big" shop. The room where the copying is permitted has a seating capacity for fifteen persons, and three chairs being allotted to Americans. At present two of these chairs are being occupied by copyists doing work on the journals of Virginia. All work done there must be copied by hand, and only one having access to the room is only permitted to examine the records after they have been duly introduced and application noted down. It is understood that the records of the office in some instances are in very bad condition, especially the records prior to 1750, and the British government contemplates the same view with the examination of these

To Get More Strength from Your Food.

WHEN the Bowels are filled with undigested food we may be a great deal worse off than if we were half starved.

Because food that stays too long in the Bowels decays there, just as if it stayed too long in the open air.

Well, when food decays in the Bowels, through delayed and overdone action, what happens?

Volume Two and Others.

Such are a few of the comments on the first volume. These will find the second volume still more interesting. It may be well to state in this connection that the third volume is expected to be out in December next, closely followed by the fourth in February, and the fifth in June so that the concluding of the Jamestown edition, five volumes of this most interesting work will be on exhibit and on the market.

During the session of 1770 an American episcopal college was situated in one of the Northern Colonies, the place warmly contested such a measure. The General Assembly of Virginia was sought by New York and New Jersey in their effort to prevent the King upon the subject, and Rev. Dr. Cooper, president of King College, New York, and Rev. Dr. McLean visited the Southern Colonies with this object in view.

As a result of the visit of these deputations, a convocation of the clergy was held, though only a few attended from Virginia. The Assembly having expressed its disapprobation of the project, all efforts soon relaxed and the movement ended with a vote of thanks as follows, was extended to the Convocation of Virginia.

"Resolved, Nominees Contradictio-

nate. That the Thanks of this House be given to the Reverend Mr. Henley, the Reverend Mr. Givens, the Reverend Mr. Bland, for the very well-formed opposition they made to the proposed project of a few

others to the Clergy of Virginia. The Assembly having voted to the Convocation of Virginia, that Mr. Richard Henry Lee, and Mr. Bland, do acquit them therewith."

Other Matters.

Editor Kennedy continues the very interesting account of small sections of the legislative history from 1700-1722, including the main feature of which is the transfer to the Colony of Virginia by the Cherokee Indians of the lands now lying in Southwestern Virginia, the States of West Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee.

In the thorough and comprehensive introduction, Mr. Kennedy notes, first, the few copies of the original journals that are extant. For the session of 1720 three copies are in the Virginia State Library, one in the Library of Congress, and one in possession of the Philadelphia Library Company. The only copy for the session of 1721 is owned by Virginia. For the session of 1722 there are three copies known of, two of which belong to the State, and one to the Library of Congress.

Regarding the Indian Trade.

The first feature of importance of the 1721 session was the attempt to regulate the Indian trade. This work Colonial Government worked with great zeal, and were finally rewarded by the decision of the Crown to the effect that the Colonies should appoint commissioners in order to perfect a system by which this question could be effectively settled.

This feature, however, was quickly overshadowed by the purchase of three-fourths of what is now the State of West Virginia. In this transaction, which was conducted by John Stuart, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the South-

ern Colonies, Virginia received all of the land lying within the following bounds: Beginning at a line where the North Carolina boundary line terminated near Holston River, in a due west direction where the line intersected the said river, thence in a direct line to the mouth of the Great Kanawha at Point Pleasant, thence following this river to its headwaters. It will be seen from this that a large part of what is now West Virginia was secured by this treaty, which was signed at London, N. C., on the 18th day of October, 1770. Two thousand nine hundred pounds sterling was the purchase price, which was four hundred pounds in excess of the original estimate made by Stuart.

About this time Edward Montague, Agent for the Colony in London, advised the Assembly of Virginia that a company who styled themselves the Ohio Company had received a grant for 1,350,000 acres of land, and that the territory acquired by them lay almost wholly within the section acquired by the treaty of 1770.

Washington to the Rescue.

Washington, hearing of this, wrote to



Colonel John Stuart, then in command of the forces of the Colonies in the new section, and had already been settled by soldiers who had served in the Indian wars along the border. He maintained that their rights should be respected, which opinion was shared later by Governor Nelson in his letter to the Earl of Hillsborough, who was then British Secretary of State. These lengthy letters both appear in full, and throw much light on the early Western settlements. Efforts upon the part of the Colonies were at once made to protect these settlers and strengthen the influence of the Colony in Washington, Nelson, Hillsborough, and others, their rights were respected. George Moore, agent for the Ohio Company, writing to Washington under date of December 18, 1770, advised him that the 200,000 acres claimed by officials of Virginia had been accepted by the company as valid. This was a signal victory for Washington, who seems to have been one of the first champions of the rights of Virginia's frontier troops. The grant in question to the Ohio Company was not fully determined upon until two years later, and was made out in the name of the Grand Council, whose purpose undoubtedly was to accommodate the claim of separate and distinct grants to the Ohio River.

First High-Tariff Protest.

An interesting feature of the session of 1722 was the association entered into on the 20th day of June by members of the House of Burgesses and a large body of merchants who assembled for that purpose in the city of Williamsburg. The object of this association was to protest the importation of various commodities, which they believed was in direct violation of the essential interests of the Colony. This whole question arose out of the enormous import duties which England had imposed upon the Colonies, and the many clauses of agreement affected about every article of importation that was being imported at that time.

Such men as Peyton Randolph, Robert Carter Nicholas, Richard Henry Lee, George Washington, Benjamin Harrison, Robert Pantler and others, signed this protest. The result, however, was not as favorable as they anticipated, though much good was done in the course of this discussion, and upon the last of August, 1722, a protest against import legislation was issued by these men.

Virginia's Enlarged Territory.

The growth of the colony to the territories of Virginia, a large number of land, the bounds of which lie in Carrollton, on the Ohio, and extend to a point near Point Pleasant on the same river, thence directly with the point near what is now known as the Clinch River, thence westward to the Cumberland and Kentucky Rivers, thence along the course of the Ohio to the point where it empties into the Mississippi at a place called Cairo. This section included lands which now lie in Virginia, West Virginia, and Eastern Kentucky, and was one of the richest sections acquired by Virginia through one of its treaties with the Cherokee Indians.

A very interesting and instructive map of all the territories acquired by the various purchases from 1720-1775 is given as a frontispiece to this excellent work as the frontispiece in this excellent work.

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